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GALICIAN *G*

Although Galicia has long been politically a part of Spain, its language is not, as Castilian writers often say, a dialect of Spanish. Its real affinities are readily made clear by a comparison of almost any of the earlier phonetic developments that differ in the two official tongues of the peninsula.

Latin	Spanish	Portuguese	Galician
caelu	cielo	céu	ceo
bona	buena	boa	boa
plēnu	lleno	cheio	cheo
hodie	hoy	hoje	hoxe
januariu	enero	janeiro	xaneiro
folia	hoja	folha	folla
basiavit	besó	beijou	beixou
factu	hecho	feito	feito
illa anima	el alma	a(i) alma	ay alma

In its later history Galician has followed sometimes one language, sometimes the other. Thus *x* still retains, as in Portuguese and Catalan, the sound of English *sh*, Slavonic *š* (*u*), while Spanish has altered it to a velar fricative similar to Russian *x* in *nacxa* "Easter." On the other hand *ch*, reduced to a simple fricative in Portuguese (as in modern French), represents the same sound-group in Galician as in Spanish and English. The distinction of open and close stressed *o* seems almost entirely lost, probably through the influence of Spanish; but unstressed *o* has taken the sound of *u*, as it has in Portuguese.

In one case Galician has undergone a peculiar change unknown in the sister-tongues: a surd fricative similar to Andalusian *j*, intermediate to Castilian *j* and English *h*, has developed out of non-palatalized *g*, as in *xogo* "game," *chaga* "wound," *seguir* "follow," *longo* "long," *algun* "some," *negro* "black." This remarkable change, apparently contrary to the usual Romance laws of phonetics, reminds one of the High German shifting of sonant occlusives to surd fricatives, as in *wissen* corresponding to Slovenian

videti, Italian *vedere*; but its development was presumably something quite different.

In Spanish the surd fricatives ζ ss x were formerly distinguished from the sonants z s j , as they still are in Portuguese. The loss of these sonants Galician shared with Spanish, in which they became surd some centuries ago; and this change was probably connected with that of Galician g into its present h -like sound. In the peninsular tongues there has always been a tendency to weaken the originally occlusive sounds of b d g to fricatives; and supposing this tendency to have been especially strong in the case of early Galician g , it is perfectly natural that this sonant fricative should have become surd when the others did.

Against this proposed solution of the question, the objection might be made that of the three consonants b d g , the one that has the least tendency to become fricative, in modern Spanish and Portuguese, is g . But this objection is by no means fatal, for it is not uncommon to find in a language opposite tendencies during different periods of its history or in different portions of its sound-system. French has gradually gotten rid of all its falling diphthongs, some being changed to rising ones (*ie oi ui*) and others contracted to simple vowels (*ai ei au eu ou*); but the modern language seems to be on the point of forming new ones with the help of vowelized palatal l . In English the tongue is generally drawn back from the teeth; in French there is just the opposite tendency. Notwithstanding this, English keeps unaltered the two dentilingual fricatives written *th* (Icelandic θ and β), while French lost these sounds long ago. The theory of an early Galician fricative g therefore seems an entirely safe assumption; and it is moreover apparently the only one that will account for the modern sound.

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